INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR JUDETEAN PRAHOVA

OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ – ETAPA LOCALA, 28.02.2026

CLASA a XI-a - SECȚIUNEA B

Varianta 1

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.

The Macabre Mile

Morbid curiosity, it turns out, is a growth industry. I am standing on a rain-slicked pavement in East London, part of a small, ghoulishly enthusiastic group about to embark on 'The Macabre Mile Walking Tour'. Our guide, Brenda, a woman whose cheerful demeanour is profoundly at odds with the subject matter, beams at us. "Right then, lovelies," she chirps, "first stop on our little tour of terror!" My initial cynicism, already well-developed, hardens into a solid block of intellectual **disdain**. These are not historians. These are connoisseurs of catastrophe.

Our group is a curious cross-section of humanity. There is a young couple, clearly on a date, whose choice of romantic activity raises a series of alarming questions. There is a quiet, intense man who nods knowingly at Brenda's every word. And there is Kevin, a self-proclaimed "Ripperologist," who occasionally corrects Brenda on minor forensic details with an air of professional superiority.

He is, he informs me without invitation, particularly interested in the killer's "geographical profiling." I just nod and scribble in my notepad, feigning journalistic interest.

We proceed from one nondescript street corner to another, each one the site of some historical horror. Brenda recounts the grim details with the practised cadence of a seasoned performer. The group listens, captivated. At first, I see only the voyeurism, the **ghoulish** thrill of standing where something terrible happened. It feels cheap, a commercialisation of tragedy. But as the tour progresses, I begin to sense a deeper, more complex motivation at play. These people are not just seeking thrills. They are seeking a narrative.

Kevin, the expert, explains it to me during a short break. "It's about ordering the chaos," he says, his eyes alight with passion. "When you study the case, the patterns, the mistakes... you put the monster in a box. You understand it. It's not just random horror anymore. It's a story with a beginning, a middle, and, well, usually a mystery."

His words linger in my mind. Perhaps this pilgrimage to the sites of past horrors is not about celebrating the monster, but about containing it. It is a way to look into the abyss from a safe distance, to experience a contained version of terror that offers a strange form of **catharsis**. My intellectual disdain begins to soften, replaced by a reluctant curiosity. The line between my journalistic observation and their peculiar hobby feels suddenly, uncomfortably thin.

As we disperse into the encroaching dusk, my earlier cynicism feels naive, a simplistic judgement of a complex human impulse. I still find the enterprise bizarre, unsettling. But I can no longer dismiss it so easily.

A. Answer the following questions. 8 points

1. What seems to be surprising about Brenda, the guide?
2. How does Kevin manifest his alleged superiority towards Brenda?
3. According to Kevin, what is the main purpose of this kind of tours?
4. In what way does the author's perspective on the "dark tourists" change?

B. Choose the right synonym. 6 points

1. disdain A. selfishness B. attitude C. contempt D. capacity
2. ghoulish A. enormous B. mysterious C. incomprehensible D. morbid
3. catharsis A. liberation B. excitement C. celebration D. grief

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. 6 points

1. But as the tour progresses, I begin to sense a deeper, more complex motivation at play.
   As we proceed……, I begin to sense a deeper, more complex motivation at play.
2. When you study the case, the patterns, the mistakes, you put the monster in a box.
   If you didn't study the case, the patterns, the mistakes, …… the monster in a box.
3. But I can no longer dismiss the enterprise so easily.
   No longer…….. the enterprise so easily.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap. 10 points

Power Naps

Power napping in an effective strategy. It involves taking an intense sleep which dramatically improves **(1)** ___ **(ALERT)**, making it especially useful for those with a **(2)** ___ **(DEMAND)** schedule such as mothers of babies or travelling business **(3)** ___ **(EXECUTE).** However, the conditions must be right and practice is required in order to **(4)** ___ **(MAXIMUM)** the effects. To prevent **(5)** ___ **(ORIENTATE)** on awakening, power naps should last **(6)** ___ **(APPROXIMATE)** 25 minutes. Falling asleep so quickly takes practice, but is in fact a habit relatively easy to acquire. Initially, it is more important to relax for a while than actually fall asleep, and power-napping is not a good idea if you find it difficult to wake up at the **(7)** ___ **(DESIGNATE)** time. Finally, power-napping should not be confused with the kind of dozing that can **(8)** ___ **(COMPANY)** a sensation of overwhelming **(9)** ___ **(SLEEP)** during the day, which simply represents the **(10)** ___ **(DESPERATE)** experienced in the attempt to compensate for a poor sleep routine.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap. 10 points

Retail therapy

For many people, 'retail therapy' offers the ultimate salvation **(1)**___ the stress of modern living. But a major new study now suggests that for millions of people, binge shopping is **(2)**___ longer an emotional cure-all. **(3)**___ anything, it may make you feel worse. 'For significant numbers, dissatisfaction is now part of the shopping process; said Lucy Purdy of analysts Publicis, that carried **(4)**___ the nationwide study. 'Shopping offers a short-term buzz, and, **(5)**___ a society, we now recognise this and we're getting fed **(6)**___ with short-term emotions.' The Publicis researchers said retailers should tailor their marketing **(7)**___ carefully, so that shoppers don't feel that they are being tricked **(8)**___ making unnecessary purchases. The psychologist Oliver lames said: 'We're now seeing a generation which has been brought up to believe that the pursuit of status and wealth is the route to fulfilment, which has **(9)**___ out to be manifestly not true. In fact, **(10)**___ rich you are has no bearing whatsoever on your mental health or well-being.'

SUBIECTUL B - INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

I. For each question decide which answer (A, B, C or D) fits best according to the text. 5 points

Digital Nomadism and the New Colonialism

Social media portrays digital nomadism as liberation: professionals conducting video calls from Bangkok cafes, launching ventures beside Guatemalan volcanoes, coding applications whilst exploring Moroccan bazaars. This lifestyle has captivated the remote work generation, promising professional success without geographical constraints. Yet beneath this aspirational narrative lurks a troubling reality, contemporary patterns of exploitation disguised as progressive global citizenship.

Conservative estimates indicate over 50 million digital nomads worldwide, predominantly Western professionals earning salaries calibrated to expensive home markets whilst residing where purchasing power increases dramatically. A developer earning $70,000 annually can live luxuriously in Prague or Porto, accessing amenities unaffordable in London or New York. This economic arbitrage forms nomadism's foundation.

Such disparities create severe local distortions. Popular destinations like Lisbon, Mexico City, and Medellin experience rapid gentrification as high-earning foreigners inflate housing markets. Long-term residents face displacement from ancestral neighbourhoods as landlords prioritise short-term rentals commanding premium rates from nomads. Professionals fleeing expensive home cities due to tech-driven gentrification now trigger identical displacement patterns in adopted temporary homes.

Cultural isolation compounds economic disruption. Nomads typically cluster in specific areas, creating parallel societies with minimal local engagement. They patronise co-working spaces mimicking Silicon Valley aesthetics, frequent restaurants serving international cuisine, and socialise predominantly with fellow nomads. This self-segregation exemplifies 'extractive mobility', exploiting favourable economic conditions whilst contributing minimally beyond inflating living costs.

Language barriers intensify this separation. Unlike traditional expatriates making long-term commitments, nomads' transitory presence discourages language acquisition. Many destinations develop dual economies: local-language markets serving residents, English-speaking sectors catering to foreigners. This linguistic segregation reinforces economic inequality, enabling nomad-serving businesses to charge premium prices whilst local establishments struggle competitively.

Visa regimes enabling nomadism expose structural inequalities. Wealthy-nation citizens enjoy unprecedented mobility, with countries competing to attract high-earning remote workers through specialised programmes. Conversely, residents of nomad destinations face increasingly restrictive travel barriers. Mexican entrepreneurs cannot easily establish Berlin businesses, nor Colombian developers casually relocate to Amsterdam. This asymmetrical mobility perpetuates global hierarchies privileging Western passports whilst constraining Global South movement.

Housing market impacts prove particularly damaging. In Lisbon, nomad demand combined with investment visa programmes renders

homeownership impossible for young Portuguese. Similar patterns emerge across popular destinations: stagnant local wages amid soaring accommodation costs calibrated to foreign purchasing power. This creates economic colonialism where locals become service providers in their own cities, unable to afford lifestyles their labour enables for visitors.

Environmental consequences are equally problematic. Nomadism generates enormous carbon footprints through constant flights, temporary accommodations, and mobility-optimised consumption patterns. Typical nomad emissions exceed settled individuals' by 300-400% annually. Climate impacts fall disproportionately on Global South destinations that historically contributed least to emissions yet bear nomadism's environmental costs.

Some advocates claim nomad spending benefits local economies through job creation and foreign currency. However, research indicates uneven distribution. Platform operators and property hosts profit whilst broader communities see minimal trickle-down effects. Nomad expenditure typically flows to international platforms rather than locally owned enterprises.

Digital nomadism represents economic rather than political colonialism, enabling privileged individuals to extract value from global inequalities whilst avoiding citizenship responsibilities or long-term commitments. The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily exposed this privilege when border closures and evacuation flights revealed nomads' dependence on Western passport power. Yet post-pandemic nomadism has intensified, suggesting structural inequalities remain unexamined by practitioners who mistake mobility for liberation whilst perpetuating exploitation through lifestyle choices.

1. What does the author argue about the popular social media portrayal of digital nomadism?

A. It is a realistic depiction of a lifestyle that is accessible to everyone.
B. It accurately reflects the lifestyle's benefits for both nomads and host countries.
C. It overemphasises the professional challenges while ignoring the personal freedoms.
D. It romanticises a lifestyle whose negative consequences are largely ignored.

2. The concept of 'extractive mobility' describes nomads who:

A. remove physical resources and cultural artefacts from destination countries
B. deliberately avoid paying local taxes whilst benefiting from public infrastructure and services
C. operate within a social bubble, making little effort at local integration
D. physically relocate local businesses to serve international markets

3. According to the text, nomadism's visa regimes demonstrate:

A. equal global mobility opportunities regardless of passport nationality
B. an imbalanced system of global access that benefits citizens of wealthier nations
C. temporary employment solutions for developing- nation unemployment
D. necessary security measures protecting destination countries from exploitation

4. The author characterises digital nomadism as economic colonialism because it:

A. allows for the enjoyment of a host country's benefits without reciprocal contribution
B. involves political control over local government institutions
C. requires military presence to maintain nomad community security
D. systematically suppresses local languages and cultural traditions

5. The author's perspective on digital nomadism can best be described as:

A. cautiously optimistic about its potential for cross-cultural understanding
B. critically concerned about exploitative structural dynamics disguised as liberation
C. enthusiastically supportive of its contributions to global economic development
D. neutrally analytical, weighing both positive and negative consequences equally

II. You have just read the text above and this announcement in a magazine: *"*In our fast-changing, highly technological global world, digital nomadism has become a trend. We invite you, our enthusiastic readers, to explore the impact of having more and more people working remotely, frequently relocating to different countries. Write an article that examines the concept of Digital Nomads, considering the following key elements: the cultural and psychological impact, the economic implications, and whether this lifestyle is as idyllic as it seems or it holds darker aspects. We will publish the best articles in our next issue".

Write your article (220 - 250 words).

45 points